

not only the disclosed embodiments, but also all equivalent ways of practicing or implementing the invention under the claims.

[0061] While certain aspects of the invention are presented below in certain claim forms, the inventors contemplate the various aspects of the invention in any number of claim forms. For example, while only one aspect of the invention is recited as embodied in a computer-readable medium, other aspects may likewise be embodied in a computer-readable medium. Accordingly, the inventors reserve the right to add additional claims after filing the application to pursue such additional claim forms for other aspects of the invention.

I/we claim:

1. At a mobile device, a method for generating a displayable icon that indicates the mood or emotion of a user of the mobile station, the method comprising:

providing an emoticon key that is to be selected by a user of the mobile station in generating the displayable icon, wherein the emoticon key is provided on a physical keypad of the mobile device, and wherein the emoticon key is labeled with a known emoticon;

in response to the emoticon key being selected, displaying a collection of graphical displayable icons that the user may select from, wherein at least some of the graphical displayable icons from the collection of graphical displayable icons indicates a mood or emotion; and

in response to a selection of one of the graphical displayable icons from the collection of graphical displayable icons, generating the one of the displayable icons for display on a display component of the mobile station, wherein the selection of the one of the graphical displayable icons is made using one or more navigation keys and selection keys on the physical keypad, and wherein the one of the graphical displayable icons is displayed in association with a textual message to be sent by the user using the mobile station.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the textual message to be sent by the user using the mobile station is an instant message in association with an instant messaging application running on the mobile station.

3. At an electronic device, a method for generating a displayable icon that indicates the mood or emotion of a user of the electronic device, the method comprising:

providing a single-stroke keypad option that is to be selected to generate the displayable icon that indicates the mood or emotion, wherein the single-stroke keypad option includes a key having the displayable icon depicted thereon; and

in response to the single-stroke keypad option being selected, generating the displayable icon for display on a display component of the electronic device, wherein the displayable icon is displayed in association with a message to be sent using the electronic device.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the single-stroke keypad option is a key on a virtual keypad displayed on a touch-sensitive display component of the electronic device, and wherein the selecting of the single-stroke keypad option includes the user of the electronic device touching the virtual keypad display in a location corresponding to the displayable icon.

5. The method of claim 3 wherein the single-stroke keypad option is a physical key on a physical keypad of the electronic device.

6. The method of claim 3 wherein the displayable icon is a textual character.

7. The method of claim 3 wherein the displayable icon is a textual icon used in association with an instant message.

8. At a mobile station, a method for generating a displayable icon that indicates the mood or emotion of a user of the mobile station, the method comprising:

providing a single key option that is to be selected by a user of the mobile station in generating the displayable icon, wherein the single key option is provided on a physical keypad of the mobile device;

in response to the single key option being selected, displaying a collection of displayable icons that the user may select from, wherein at least some of the displayable icons from the collection of displayable icons indicates a mood or emotion; and

in response to a selection of one of the displayable icons from the collection of displayable icons, generating the one of the displayable icons for display on a display component of the mobile station.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the user selects a displayable icon from the list of displayable icons via a navigation keypad option.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the collection of displayable icons that the user may select from is displayed as each icon being a keypad on a virtual keyboard presented on the display component of the mobile device, wherein each of the keys in the virtual keyboard option maps to a key on the physical keypad on the mobile device, and wherein selection of a corresponding key on the physical keypad displays the mapped key on the virtual keyboard.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein each of the displayable icons from the collection of displayable icons comprises a graphical image.

12. The method of claim 8, further comprising transmitting an indication of the displayable icon from the mobile station, wherein the indication of the displayable icon is sent in the form of a text data, and wherein upon receipt by a receiving station, the displayable icon is displayed as either a textual icon or a graphical icon, depending on capabilities associated with the receiving station.

13. A computer-readable medium whose contents perform a method to cause a portable device to provide enhanced communication capabilities, the method comprising:

providing at least one set of graphics to represent various human emotions or events, wherein the set of graphics includes at least one emoticon;

providing, as default and without prior user input, a mapping between a single user-selectable key on the portable device and the set of graphics;

in response to user-selection of the user-selectable key, displaying the set of graphics; and

in response to user input selecting one of the graphics in the set of graphics, inserting the selected graphic into a text message.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13 wherein the portable device permits instant messaging communication with at least first and second instant messaging communities, wherein providing at least one set of graphics includes providing first and second differing sets of graphics